U.S. Department
of Transportation

Federal Aviation Administration

Advisory Circular

Subject: **PILOT PROFICIENCY AWARD PROGRAM**

Date: **4/26/96**
Initiated by: **AFS-810**

AC No: **61-91H**
Change:

1. PURPOSE. This advisory circular (AC) describes the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Pilot Proficiency Award Program and outlines the eligibility requirements for pilots to qualify for Phase I through Phase XX Pilot Proficiency Awards.

2. OBJECTIVE. Regular proficiency training is essential to the safety of all pilots and their passengers. The objective of the Pilot Proficiency Award Program is to provide pilots with the opportunity to establish and participate in a personal recurrent training program. Aviation safety is a cooperative effort of all members of the aviation community. The FAA encourages each pilot to establish a regular recurrent training program and invites pilots to participate in the Pilot Proficiency Award Program.

3. CANCELLATION. AC 61-91G, Pilot Proficiency Award Program, dated 8/4/94, is canceled.

4. WHO MAY PARTICIPATE. All pilots holding a recreational pilot certificate or higher and a current medical certificate, when required, may participate. In addition, uncertificated pilots of qualified ultralight vehicles under Title 14 of the Federal Code of Regulations (14 CFR) part 103 may participate. Requests to participate in the program should be made to a certificated flight instructor, an appointed Aviation Safety Counselor (ASC), or the Safety Program Manager (SPM) in the local FAA Flight Standards District Office (FSDO).

5. INCENTIVE AWARDS - PILOT WINGS AND CERTIFICATE. The Pilot Proficiency Award Program is now a 20-phase program. Upon completion of each of the first 10 phases, pilots become eligible to wear and are presented with a distinctive lapel or tie pin (wings) and a certificate of completion. Phase I wings are plain bronze tone. Phase II wings are silver tone with a star added. Phase III wings are gold tone with a star and wreath. Phase IV wings are gold tone and have a simulated ruby mounted in the shield. Phase V wings are gold tone with a rhinestone mounted in the shield. Phase VI wings are gold tone with a simulated sapphire mounted in the shield. Phases VII, VIII, and IX wings are gold tone with the appropriate Roman numeral displayed within the wreath. Phase X wings are bright gold tone with the Roman numeral X and shield located within a ring of 10 stars. No complimentary wings will be issued. Pilots, regardless of certificate type, ratings, or position, must earn the privilege of wearing the pilot proficiency wings. A pin and certificate will be awarded for Phases I through X. A certificate only will be awarded for Phases XI through XX.

> **NOTE: Seaplane-rated pilots who specify "seawings" on their proficiency record/ wings application form and complete the requirements listed below for seaplanes and amphibians will receive a distinctive seawings pin.**

6. PARTICIPATION IN THE PILOT PROFICIENCY AWARD PROGRAM IN LIEU OF A FLIGHT REVIEW. A pilot need not accomplish the flight review requirements of 14 CFR part 61, § 61.56 if, since the beginning of the 24th calendar month before the month in which that pilot acts as pilot in command, he or she has satisfactorily completed one or more phases of an FAA-sponsored Pilot Proficiency Award Program in an aircraft (reference § 61.56(f)).

7. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS PHASES I THROUGH XX. Minimum requirements, which include specific subjects and flight maneuvers, have been established for airplanes, seaplanes and amphibians, rotorcraft, gliders, lighter-than-air aircraft, and ultralights. The required training profiles represent those phases of operation that have been identified by accident reports as phases most likely to produce accidents. These training profiles are established for each category of aircraft. Pilots may select the category and class of aircraft or ultralight in which they wish to receive their flight training. All training must place special emphasis on safety of flight operations. All training requirements for each phase of the program must be completed within 12 months. After completing a phase of the program, pilots may begin working on the requirements of the succeeding phase at any time; however, 12 months must pass between the date of completion of a phase and application for the award for the next phase.

a. Airplanes.

(1) One hour of flight training to include basic airplane control, stalls, turns, and other maneuvers directed toward mastery of the airplane.

(2) One hour of flight training to include approaches, takeoffs, and landings, including crosswind, soft field, and short field techniques.

(3) One hour of instrument training in an airplane, FAA-approved aircraft simulator, or training device.

b. Seaplanes and Amphibians.

(1) One hour of flight training in a seaplane or amphibian to include a demonstration by the applicant of a complete seaplane or amphibian passenger safety briefing, a weight and balance computation and interpretation for the actual flight, a review and evaluation of the current and forecast weather, and on-the-water training in docking, beaching and anchoring, and maneuvering in confined areas.

(2) One hour of flight training in a seaplane or amphibian to include landing area assessment, safe approaches and departures, takeoffs, and landings, including crosswind, rough water, and glassy water techniques. (Conditions may be simulated.)

(3) One hour of flight training in a seaplane or amphibian to include power-on and power-off stalls in various configurations with minimum altitude loss, power-off emergency landings, step taxi, step turns, rapid decelerations from the step, and emergency procedures. In addition to the 1 hour of flight time (*not included* in the 1 hour), there must be a discussion of stall avoidance and prevention techniques.

NOTE: If the applicant is not qualified *and* current in accordance with § 61.57 for instrument flight, 1 additional hour of basic instrument training with emphasis on partial panel approaches, inadvertent penetration into instrument meteorological conditions (180° turn), descent into visual meteorological conditions, and safe operations shall be accomplished in an airplane, seaplane, FAA-approved aircraft simulator, or training device for each odd-numbered award phase (Phase I, III, V, etc.).

c. Rotorcraft.

(1) One hour of ground training to include use of the rotorcraft flight manual to determine operating limitations, weight and balance computations, performance data, aircraft servicing, use of optional equipment, and standard emergency procedures.

(2) One hour of flight training to include airport and traffic pattern operations, including departures from a hover (helicopter only), normal and crosswind approaches and landings, maximum performance takeoffs, and steep approaches.

(3) One hour of flight training to include systems orientation, autorotative descents, power failure at a hover, settling-with-power, pinnacle/rooftop takeoffs and landings, and navigation procedures.

d. Gliders.

(1) One hour of ground training to include preflight operations, including installation of wings and tail surfaces, on-line inspection, use of glider operating limitations, weight and balance computations, performance data, and standard emergency procedures.

(2) One hour or three flights to include launch procedures, proper position during tow, emergency procedures such as a slack line or tow rope failure, and tow release procedures.

(3) One hour or three flights to include thermalling procedures, flight in close proximity to other aircraft, maneuvers at various performance

speeds, demonstration of best lift over drag (L/D) and minimum sink, and precision approaches and landings.

e. Lighter-Than-Air.

(1) One hour of ground training to include fuel management, refueling, proper inflation procedures, review of the flight manual, and proper weather check.

(2) One hour of flight training to include approaches, touch-and-go, level flight, rapid descent and level out, and simulated landing in a congested area.

(3) One hour of flight training to include relighting the pilot light, simulated high wind/short field landings, and other simulated emergency situations.

f. Ultralights. Pilot Proficiency Award Program training given in powered ultralight vehicles by United States Ultralight Association, Inc. (USUA)-approved flight instructors or other approved powered ultralight flight instructors will be accepted.

(1) One hour of ground training on preflight operations to include operating limitations, weight and balance computations, performance data, vehicle servicing, use of optional equipment, and standard emergency equipment.

(2) One hour of basic vehicle control, turns and other maneuvers directed towards mastery of the vehicle.

(3) One hour of flight training to include airport and traffic pattern operations, including departures, normal and crosswind approaches and landings, maximum performance takeoffs, and steep approaches.

g. Mountain Flying Course. Applicants who successfully complete an FAA-sponsored or FAA-sanctioned mountain flying course, including ground and flight training, may substitute this course for the safety meeting required by subparagraph h when completing all other mountain flying requirements.

(1) One hour of flight training to include basic airplane control, stalls, and other maneuvers with emphasis on the use and difference of performing these maneuvers in mountainous terrain and under high density altitude conditions.

(2) One hour of flight training to include approaches, takeoffs, and landings at or simulating mountain airports with high density altitudes.

(3) One hour of ground training to include effects of high density altitude, mountain terrain, and mountain weather conditions.

h. Safety Meetings.

(1) All applicants must attend at least one FAA-sponsored or FAA-sanctioned aviation safety seminar or industry-conducted recurrent training program.

(2) Attendance at an Aviation Safety Program aviation safety seminar must be verified in the pilot's logbook or other proficiency record. This verification must be signed by an FAA SPM, other FAA inspector, or an ASC involved in conducting the seminar.

(3) Attendance at a physiological training course conducted under the FAA/U.S. Air Force or U.S. Navy training agreements at various military installations in the United States is also acceptable as a safety meeting. It is necessary to complete AC Form 3150-7, Physiological Training Application/ Agreement, to participate in physiological training. The form may be obtained from the SPM in the local FSDO or by a letter of request to:

Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center
Airman Education Programs, AAM-400
P.O. Box 25082
Oklahoma City, OK 73125

Pilots who do not wish to participate in physiological training need not complete the form. Pilots completing a physiological training course will receive FAA Form 3150-1, Physiological Training. A completed FAA Form 3150-1 must be submitted to the SPM for verification of course completion.

i. Training Substitution. Completion of a training program or a flight instructor refresher clinic conducted by various organizations such as flight schools, air carriers, or other training facilities may be substituted for the requirements of the Pilot Proficiency Award Program, if the minimums outlined in paragraphs 7a, b, c, d, e, f, and g are met.

j. Aircraft Accidents and Enforcement Actions. Involvement in an aircraft or ultralight vehicle accident and/or a pending or completed enforcement action will not preclude participation in the Pilot Pro-

ficiency Award Program. However, a pilot who has been involved in an accident or enforcement action should request that the flight instructor place special emphasis on the causal factors of the accident or enforcement action during pilot proficiency training. The instructor should focus the training on educating the pilot in ways to preclude future accidents or enforcement actions.

8. PILOT PROFICIENCY AWARDS EARNED BY FLIGHT INSTRUCTORS.

a. Phase I Through III Requirements. A certificated flight instructor, USUA-approved flight instructor, or other approved powered ultralight flight instructor may earn Phases I through III wings by providing the required instruction for completion of a phase of the Pilot Proficiency Award Program to three pilots (a minimum of 9 hours of instruction). To qualify for a Phase I wings award, an instructor must document the completion of the training he or she has given to at least three pilots and attend or participate in an aviation safety seminar or clinic. The instruction given must be in accordance with paragraphs 7a, b, c, or d, e, f, or g, as appropriate. The completion of the required instruction for three additional pilots and attendance or participation in an additional safety seminar or clinic is required to earn a Phase II award. An instructor may repeat the requirements stipulated for a Phase II award to earn a Phase III award.

b. Phase IV Through XX Requirements. Twelve months after the date of meeting the requirements for the Phase III award, a certificated flight instructor, USUA-approved flight instructor, or other approved powered ultralight flight instructor may apply for the Phase IV award. Phases IV through XX award wings and/or certificate may be earned by the successful completion of an evaluation or proficiency flight with a designated flight instructor examiner or an FAA operations inspector and by attending or participating in an aviation safety seminar or clinic. USUA-approved or other approved powered ultralight vehicle flight instructors may receive their evaluations or proficiency flights with a USUA-approved advanced flight instructor. Twelve months must pass between the date of completion of each phase and application for the award for the next phase.

c. Safety Meetings. Flight instructors and powered ultralight vehicle flight instructors must also attend or participate in at least one FAA-sponsored or FAA-sanctioned aviation safety seminar, attend an FAA-approved Flight Instructor Refresher Clinic, or complete a physiological training course as specified in paragraph 7h(3) to meet the requirements for each phase of the awards. Attendance must also be verified in the flight instructor's logbook or other proficiency record. This verification must be signed by an SPM, other FAA inspector, or any APC involved in conducting the above programs.

9. AWARDING OF THE PILOT PROFICIENCY WINGS AND CERTIFICATE.

a. Endorsement Verification. As pilots complete each step of training outlined in paragraphs 7 or 8, whichever is appropriate, their logbooks or other proficiency records must be endorsed by the persons who gave the instruction. That endorsement should read substantively as follows:

> Mr./Ms._____, holder of pilot certificate no._____, has satisfactorily completed the training requirements outlined in Advisory Circular 61-91H, paragraphs 7a, b, c, d, e, f, or g (state which)
> /s/ (date) M. Smith, 385652472CFI *or*
> /s/ (date) M. Smith, USUA Ultralight Instructor (or other approved instructor)123454
>
> **Note: In the case of ultralights, no certificate number is required.**

b. Award of Pilot Proficiency Wings and Certificate. The Pilot Proficiency Award certificate and the appropriate wings will be awarded after the pilot's logbook or other proficiency record (such as a properly documented "wings card") is presented to the SPM for verification of completion of training as stipulated in this AC.

William J. White
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